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Letter dated 13 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the written statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the Prime Minister of Mauritius on 13 September 2002 in the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be most grateful if you could arrange to have the text of the present letter and the annexed statement circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 9.

(*Signed*) Jeremy **Greenstock**
Permanent Representative

* A/57/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 13 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the Prime Minister of Mauritius in the general debate on 13 September 2002

The British Government maintains that the British Indian Ocean Territory is British and has been since 1814. It does not recognize the sovereignty claim of the Mauritian Government. However, the British Government has recognized Mauritius as the only State which has a right to assert a claim of sovereignty when the United Kingdom relinquishes its own sovereignty.

Successive British Governments have given undertakings to the Government of Mauritius that the Territory will be ceded when no longer required for defence purposes, subject to the requirements of international law.

The British Government remains open to discussions regarding arrangements governing the British Indian Ocean Territory or the future of the Territory. The British Government has stated that when the time comes for the Territory to be ceded it will liaise closely with the Government of Mauritius.

The British Government values its close and constructive cooperation with the Government of Mauritius on a wide range of issues and looks forward to this continuing.